

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELGRA 01953 240946Z

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 240924Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9169

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL ZAGREB UNN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 1953

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IT YO

SUBJ: EXCHANGE WITH SENATOR KENNEDY OVER SIXTH FLEET
IN ADRIATIC

1. IN A DINNER TABLE EXCHANGE AT APRIL 17 FEC DINNER, AMBASSADOR TOLD SENATOR KENNEDY HE WAS SOMEWHAT PUZZLED BY LATTER'S SHARP OBSERVATIONS ABOUT SIXTH FLEET SINCE SENATOR SURELY WAS AWARE MANEUVERS HAD BEEN PLANNED LONG IN ADVANCE OF OUTBREAK OF ITALIAN-YUGOSLAV DISPUTE OVER TRIESTE. POINTING OUT SIMILAR EXERCISES HAD TAKEN PLACE ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS IN PAST AND PORT VISITS TO TRIESTE AFTER MANEUVERS WERE ROUTINE AND EQUALLY WITH AMPLE PRECEDENT, AMBASSADOR SAID WHILE HE AGREED WITH YUGOSLAV COLLEAGUES THAT TIMING OF MANEUVERS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN WORSE, IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR ALL TO UNDERSTAND THAT THEIR TAKING PLACE IN CONJUNCTION WITH TRIESTE DISPUTE WAS PURELY COINCIDENTAL.

2. SENATOR SAID WHILE HE DID NOT DISAGREE WITH AMBASSADOR'S OBSERVATIONS, HE FELT IT WAS STUPID TO HOLD MANEUVERS IN SUCH A SENSITIVE AREA AS TRIESTE, THE SIXTH FLEET HIGH COMMAND SHOULD HAVE CONSULTED POLITICAL AUTHORITIES BEFORE DECIDING ON SUCH MANEUVERS, AND EXPRESSED CERTAINTY THAT IF AMBASSADOR HAD BEEN CONSULTED HE WOULD HAVE COUNSELED AGAINST IT. SENATOR SAID HE FELT STRONGLY THAT SUCH
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DECISIONS SHOULD BE MADE BY POLITICALLY SAVVY PEOPLE

RATHER THAN NAVAL OFFICERS, AND IT WAS THIS WORD HE
WOULD CARRY BACK TO WASHINGTON.

3. AMBASSADOR AGREED THAT HAD HE BEEN CONSULTED HE WOULD HAVE
ADVISED AGAINST MANEUVERS CLOSE TO TRIESTE, AND IN ANY CASE,
FELT STRONGLY THAT AMBASSADORS SHOULD BE GIVEN OPPORTUNITY FOR
POLITICAL INPUT ON DECISIONS ON MILITARY EXERCISES IN THEIR AREAS.

4. EXCHANGE WAS MONITORED WITH KEEN INTEREST BY ALL AT
TABLE, WITH PARTICULAR INTEREST BEING PAID BY DEPUTY FOREIGN
SECRETARY JAKSA PETRIC AND ASST FEDERAL DEFENSE SECRETARY
FOR FEC LIAISON (AND NATIONAL DEFENSE COUNCIL SECRETARY)
COL. GEN IVAN DOLNICAR.
TOON

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